Saskatchewan Learning

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# Building Communities of Hope

## Effective Practices for Meeting the Diverse Learning Needs of Children and Youth

Community Schools Policy and Conceptual Framework

Revised 2004

Children's Services and Programs Branch
Saskatchewan Learning
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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document is a revision of *Building Communities of Hope: Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At-Risk and Indian and Métis Students*, which was published in 1996. The original document was developed with the ideas and commitment of a number of dedicated people in schools, school divisions, and community organizations. Appreciation is sincerely extended to all those involved.

This revised policy and conceptual framework reflects over two decades of strengths and experiences of Community Schools throughout the province. We are indebted to the leadership of the Community Schools, boards of education, staffs, parents, and communities involved. Through innovation and partnerships they have pioneered many of the effective practices identified in this document. In addition, it draws extensively on the literature from the field. References and recommended readings are included in Appendix E.

**Note:**

The term **"parent"** is used to refer to a child's significant care-giver. This may include a child's mother, father, grandparent, aunt, uncle, sister, brother, foster parent, or other guardian.

The role and contributions of the **"school"** are discussed throughout this document. It is recognized that the school is made up of a number of people including students, teachers, principal, other staff, family and community members, and human service partners.

The term **"family"** can be defined as any combination of two or more persons bound together by ties of mutual consent, birth, and/or adoption/placement and who, together, assume responsibility for variant combinations of some of the following: physical maintenance and care of group members; addition of new members through procreation or adoption; socialization of children; social control of members; production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services; and affective nurturing.

The term **"Aboriginal peoples"** is used in reference to the original inhabitants or indigenous peoples of Canada and their descendants. Aboriginal peoples include the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people of Canada.

***You are welcome to copy and distribute this document.***

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# I. Introduction: Building Communities of Hope

Students learn best when they are nourished, have safety and stability in their families and communities, are respected for who they are, and when their needs are being met. To remove barriers to their learning, growing numbers of students require a diverse range of social, health, cultural, justice, and other services. A successful learning program includes authentic family and community engagement and draws on the strengths of stable contributing communities.

Community Schools endeavour to provide children and youth with a learning environment and program that is culturally affirming and that respects and reflects their histories, experiences, and educational needs. As well, they provide innovative, caring, and effective responses to the learning needs of children and youth.

Community Schools are founded upon the principles of community education, which in turn have roots in community development. Community Schools build strong relationships with families, community members, and organizations. These close ties serve to improve educational opportunities and programs and to strengthen the communities in which the schools are located. Community Schools recognize that children come to school as whole beings and understand the reciprocity between difficulties they experience at home or in school and how they impact on the well-being and success of children and youth. They take into account the cultural and socio-economic life experiences of children and youth, and provide the comprehensive range of supports needed for students to learn. This philosophy is now recognized as an effective way to work with all students, their families, and communities. The "doing" or application will look different in each setting, but the philosophy, the "way we do things", the shared vision of community education is the common thread.

***Community Schools History in Saskatchewan***

***1980***
*Eleven Community Schools designated in the core neighbourhoods of Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert to address issues of urban Aboriginal poverty.*

***1996***
*Building Communities of Hope, Community Schools Policy and Conceptual Framework released.*

***2001***
*Role of the Schools Task Force recommends that all Saskatchewan schools adopt the Community Schools philosophy. The number of Community Schools doubles and expands to include rural, K-12, and secondary schools.*

***2004***
*98 designated Community Schools, representing 12% of provincial schools in Saskatchewan.*

## Effective Practices

*Building Communities of Hope: Effective Practices for Meeting Diverse Learning Needs of Children and Youth* provides the policy, vision, principles, and program direction for Community Schools and other schools embracing community education philosophy. The Community School framework described in this document incorporates a number of practices that have proven to be highly effective in the education of vulnerable and First Nations and Métis students. Taken together, this comprehensive approach has the potential to create the holistic, preventive, caring, and empowering educational environment required by all children, youth, and their families.

The comprehensive range of effective practices includes:

- a high quality, culturally affirming learning program;
- a comprehensive range of student supports and services provided within the school or linked to it;
- full engagement and partnership with youth, families, and community members;
- a dynamic mechanism for planning, evaluation, and renewal within the school;
- the development of a caring and respectful school culture and climate; and
- heightened emphasis on the responsibility of the school to work with youth, families, and community to strengthen the community.

## School$^{PLUS}$ and Community Education

In its 2001 final report, the Role of the School Task Force recognized the inclusive community approaches and effective practices used by Community Schools as "the best way to operate schools". The Task Force saw community education philosophy and practices as foundational for all schools. In the provincial response to the Task Force, government strongly endorsed community education as a key element of School$^{PLUS}$ and asked all schools in the province to adopt community education philosophy in their practices. Schools today have two primary functions: to educate children and youth by developing the whole child and to support service delivery with families. This understanding of school is challenging us to rethink how educational and other services are delivered for children and families who must be involved in the process. This understanding is also challenging us to rethink the methods we use to work together.

A key element of School$^{PLUS}$ is community engagement and the development of a learning community. This concept is founded on the principles of community education. (See Appendix B for the Community Education rubric.)

The Community Schools framework is well grounded in the School$^{PLUS}$ Effective Practices model. Further connections to the School$^{PLUS}$ model are described in Section C, Collaborative Planning and Monitoring Process.

### Working Together to Build Communities of Hope

The vision, philosophy, and program elements outlined in this document provide a picture of what schools can be and how services that support student learning and well-being can be delivered more effectively—a framework for creating learning communities of hope. The achievement of this vision requires the commitment, support, and shared resources of boards of education, educators, families, community members, human service partners, and the provincial government.

## Community Schools Policy and Conceptual Framework: At a Glance

**Vision:**

Saskatchewan Community Schools are centres of learning and hope for their families and communities. The diverse learning needs of children and youth are met by incorporating a comprehensive range of effective educational practices. Community Schools are responsive, inclusive, culturally affirming, and academically challenging. The learning program and environment effectively build on strengths to address the needs of the communities they serve. As hubs for the delivery of an array of services and supports, Community Schools use collaborative approaches to achieve learning excellence and well-being for the entire community.

**Opportunities and Challenges:**

- Meeting the diverse learning needs of all children and youth;
- Responding to the educational needs of Aboriginal students;
- Enhancing involvement of First Nations and Métis peoples;
- Facilitating family and community engagement and developing shared responsibility; and
- Engaging youth as authentic partners.

**Goals:**

- Student learning and success;
- A high quality education program;
- Shared responsibility;
- Comprehensive, responsive services;
- Enhanced participation in public education by First Nations and Métis peoples;
- Community empowerment;
- Equity and cultural harmony; and
- Leadership in educational innovation.

**Principles:**

- Educational excellence;
- Collaboration and openness;
- Equity and respect for diversity and cultural responsiveness;
- Preventive and comprehensive approaches;
- Empowerment; and
- Accountability.

**Effective Practices:**

- Responsive curriculum and instruction;
- Assessment for learning;
- Caring and respectful school environment;
- Adaptive leadership;
- Authentic partnerships; and
- Comprehensive prevention and early intervention.

**Components of the Community School Framework:**

- The Learning Program
- Family and Community Partnerships
- Integrated Services
- Community Development
- Collaborative Planning and Monitoring Process
- Process for Ongoing Renewal and the Community School Plan

# II. Opportunities and Challenges: Why Adopt a Comprehensive Approach?

There are a number of reasons to strengthen and promote Community Schools in Saskatchewan. These include:

## 1. Meeting the Diverse Learning Needs of All Children and Youth

Significant numbers of children and youth come to school with complex social, emotional, physical, health, and developmental challenges that present barriers to their learning. Factors such as poverty, family breakdown, violence and abuse, teen pregnancy, and substance abuse can have a serious impact on children's educational experience, compromising their opportunities for success in school and later in life.

The opportunities presented through the challenges many students and their families face require a range of services and supports that cuts across the boundaries of schools, human service partners, and different departments of government. Opportunities now exist for families, communities, human service partners, and others to work together to create supportive, safe, and stable environments out of school.

Research has demonstrated that taken together, the comprehensive range of supports and practices provided in this framework are the most effective means of addressing the complex needs of students and removing barriers to their learning. Any one of these elements in isolation or a piecemeal approach has limited chance of success.

*Almost 50,000 (18.1%) of Saskatchewan children lived in poverty in 1999.*
*(Saskatchewan Learning, 2002)*

*In the face of significant risks such as poverty, many children and youth have demonstrated individual abilities and gifts -- characteristics which make them resilient.*
*(Saskatchewan Community Schools Association Powerpoint, 2001)*

***Multiple Effect of Risk Factors***

*Normally the existence of one risk factor, such as poverty, does not place a child at risk. However, risk factors tend to be present in clusters. For example, alcoholism and family dysfunction are often present with family poverty and it is these clusters that manifest problems for child well-being and success.*

*The multiple effects of these risk factors have been documented. "One risk factor is no more likely than zero risk factor to predict difficulty. However, if two or three risk factors are present, the chances for an unfavourable outcome increase four times. With four risk factors the chances of a negative outcome are increased ten times.*
*(Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development,1996)*

*Based on the examination of children's cognitive and behavioural outcomes rather than risk factors, of Canadian children, 28.6% are vulnerable.*
*(Willms, 2002)*

*Cultural responsiveness is another aspect of gap-closing schools. Adults acknowledge the legitimacy of the cultural heritage of every child and learn enough about them to build meaningful bridges. The use of a wide variety of instructional strategies increases teachers' success at connecting with the diverse needs and styles of the learners. Students are actively taught to know and praise their own and each other's cultures, and multicultural information is incorporated across the subjects taught in the school – not just in social studies and on ethnic holidays. (Holcomb, 2004)*

## 2. Responding to the Educational Needs of Aboriginal Students

Community Schools respond to the educational needs of Aboriginal students by increasing their knowledge of Aboriginal cultures and providing content, learning materials, and a learning environment that affirms the identity, cultures, and values of First Nations and Métis peoples. Through the engagement of Elders and other cultural resource people, opportunities are created to include and reflect Indigenous Knowledge within the learning program.

## 3. Enhancing Involvement of First Nations and Métis Peoples

The province is at an historical turning point with the growth of the Aboriginal population, presenting both a challenge for change, and an unparalleled opportunity to create a shared future. New relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples are needed based on principles of mutual respect, equity, and shared responsibility, that enable Aboriginal peoples to enjoy the full benefits of society. Publicly-funded education has a significant role to play in fostering shared understanding among diverse interests and groups and equitable opportunities for all. (Government of Saskatchewan, 2002).

- *In 2001, Aboriginal peoples represented 27.4% of the pre-school-aged population and about 22% of the school-aged population. (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002)*
- *By the year 2016, it is projected that close to 45% of the children entering Kindergarten in the province will be of Aboriginal ancestry. (Saskatchewan Learning Projections, unpublished, 2004)*

Within Saskatchewan's public education system, opportunities are needed for First Nations and Métis peoples to take a greater role in the management of their children's education. Community Schools provide a ready opportunity to strengthen Aboriginal involvement and to negotiate shared decision-making with boards of education. Working together is essential for the sustainability of our province's future. This will require sharing power, developing relationships, challenging assumptions, and creating the conditions for meaningful involvement of First Nations and Métis peoples in education.

### 4. Facilitating Family and Community Engagement and Developing Shared Responsibility

Many parents and community organizations are calling for a stronger voice in education planning and decision-making. At the same time, schools are recognizing the necessity and advantages of greater family and community partnerships in strengthening their programs and achieving student success. Community Schools partner with parents, community and businesses to provide a broad range of supports and services which facilitate shared responsibility for the well-being and success of children and youth.

*Parental involvement is also an important aspect of a school's success. Schools with high levels of parental involvement, on average, have higher levels of achievement and shallower gradients, even after controlling for the effects of students' family backgrounds.*
*(Ho & Willms, 1996)*

Family engagement in the learning process has been identified as an important determinant of student success. Many schools face the challenge of involving parents who have traditionally not played an active role in the education of their children. An important focus in Community Schools is capacity building, which involves developing leadership skills and achieving full and meaningful engagement of families and community members.

### 5. Engaging Youth as Authentic Partners

School communities present opportunities to engage and empower youth as authentic partners thereby creating pre-conditions foundational to learning and life success. When adults support and affirm youth engagement and contributions, young people gain confidence and develop the skills and disposition for self-direction and collaboration. The school community as a whole also grows stronger. A culture for success is shaped by sharing responsibilities with young people. Learning becomes purposeful and relevant for students when they are included in establishing, working towards, and achieving goals as individual learners and as contributing school community members. By shifting communication patterns to be more inclusive of students, young learners are supported to become critical thinkers, creative problem solvers, and competent decision makers. They are encouraged and valued as active and socially responsible members of their school and community.

*The research literature we have reviewed provides strong support for the existence of a link between youth engagement and positive health outcomes. ... Moreover, there was also evidence that engaged youth were less depressed, had higher self-esteem, were more physically active, obtained higher grades in school, and showed a greater commitment to their friends, families and communities.*
*(The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, 2003)*

How youth can be engaged will vary. Youth engagement is dependent upon the willingness of adults to offer information, opportunities, and support to youth. There are numerous benefits to involving young people as authentic partners in learning such as their first-hand knowledge of youth interests and concerns, or the multiplying impact of positive student peer power and support. Students have much to teach us about education when we include them in the dialogue about renewing and improving schools.

# III. Policy, Vision, Goals, Principles, and Effective Practices for Community Schools

## Policy

It is the policy of Saskatchewan Learning to actively promote and support the adoption by boards of education of a comprehensive, preventive, culturally affirming, and community-based approach to meeting the diverse learning needs of children and youth. The Community Schools framework advocates for incorporating a holistic range of supports and approaches proven to be effective in the education of children and youth.

## Vision, Goals, Principles, and Effective Practices

The vision, goals, principles and effective practices below provide a foundation for creating a learning community of hope for children and youth. This framework will guide Community Schools as they implement community education within their own communities based on their strengths, needs, priorities, and resources.

***Vision:***

Saskatchewan Community Schools are centres of learning and hope for their families and communities. The diverse learning needs of children and youth are met by incorporating a comprehensive range of effective educational practices. Community Schools are responsive, inclusive, culturally affirming, and academically challenging. The learning program and environment effectively build on strengths to address the needs of the communities they serve. As hubs for the delivery of an array of services and supports, Community Schools use collaborative approaches to achieve learning excellence and well-being for the entire community.

***Goals:***

The goals for Community Schools contribute to achieving the vision. They include:

1. **Learning and Success**

   All children and youth have the opportunity and supports they require to achieve their potential and succeed in school and in life.

2. **A High Quality Education Program**

   To provide a high quality, culturally affirming, and challenging education program that incorporates and enhances the components and initiatives of Core Curriculum.

3. **Shared Responsibility**

   School staff, students, parents, and the community share responsibility for the education and well-being of children and youth. This is demonstrated by active family and community partnerships in education planning, problem solving, and service delivery. A shared understanding of educational and community issues is required.

4. **Comprehensive, Responsive Services**

   The school serves as the hub of a comprehensive, responsive, community-based system of education, health, social, justice, and recreation services provided to meet the needs of children, youth, and their families.

5. **Enhanced Participation in Public Education by First Nations and Métis Peoples**

   First Nations and Métis peoples actively participate in the design, implementation, management and evaluation of school programs.

6. **Community Empowerment**

   Communities are stable, safe, supportive, and healthy. Families, students, school personnel, and other community members are actively involved in improving the quality of life in the community.

7. **Equity and Cultural Harmony**

   The students, staff, parents, and community members engaged in the school respect one another; there is equity, cultural understanding, and harmony in the school and the community.

8. **Leadership in Educational Innovation**

   Community Schools strive to be leaders in educational innovation to meet diverse learning needs. They model and provide leadership in incorporating the effective practices outlined in this document, sharing their experiences with others.

### *Principles:*

The principles that guide Community Schools include:

1. **Educational Excellence**

   Educational programming and services are of the highest quality. They are responsive, culturally affirming, challenging, and delivered in a caring and respectful school environment. All children and youth are supported to achieve their full potential.

2. **Collaboration and Openness**

   The school staff, students, families, and community members are mutually supportive partners who share responsibility for the education and well-being of children and youth. Community Schools are centres of community. They are open and welcoming, where people of all ages can learn and become meaningfully engaged in the school and community and take part in recreational, social, and cultural activities.

3. **Equity: Respect for Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness**

   The cultural heritage, life experience, unique potential, and capabilities of each child, young person, or adult are respected and reflected throughout all aspects of the educational experience. All students have the opportunity to experience success and develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to contribute meaningfully to society, while at the same time maintaining their unique cultural identity. This principle goes beyond equality of opportunity where everyone is treated the same, to fostering a barrier-free environment where individuals benefit and contribute equally. To be culturally responsive, schools must be prepared to ensure that each student grows and develops in such a way as to remain connected with his or her own community.

4. **Preventive and Comprehensive Approaches**

   Programs and services are designed to anticipate and offer supports to children and youth before significant problems require major intervention. The needs of children, youth, and families are addressed holistically, recognizing the

interconnected nature of the problems and their solutions. As well, the needs and well-being of children and youth are considered in the context of the many family and community relationships that nurture them and to which they are attached.

5. **Empowerment**

   Through leadership development and collaborative processes, Community Schools strengthen the capacity of children, youth, families, and communities to operate cooperatively and self-sufficiently, to identify strengths, to determine their own needs, and to plan how they will meet those needs.

6. **Accountability**

   Boards of Education, Community School councils, administrators, school staff, students, families, community members, human service partners, and provincial government are collectively responsible for assessing the effectiveness and success of the program in meeting its planned objectives.

### *Effective Practices:*

The strategies used by Community Schools to achieve their goals include:

1. **Responsive Curriculum and Instruction**

   All partners (staff, students, parents and community members) implement and assess the learning program and educational approaches, bearing in mind that schools must reflect the communities they serve. The learning program and educational approaches incorporate all aspects of Core Curriculum including the Required Areas of Study, Common Essential Learnings, the Adaptive Dimension, Locally Determined Options and a range of diverse educational supports.

2. **Assessment for Learning**

   A dynamic planning process is instituted that engages the school personnel, parents, youth, and community members in ongoing planning and evaluation to ensure successful outcomes for all children and youth.

3. **Caring and Respectful School Environment**

   A caring and respectful school environment is created that is centred on an unconditional commitment to all children, youth, families, and community members. An open, inclusive, and culturally affirming environment encourages positive and collaborative relationships both inside and outside of the

classroom. A barrier-free learning environment exists where all benefit equitably from a variety of learning experiences and comprehensive supports and services in the classroom, the school, and the community. Community Schools honour diversity, grow in their knowledge and respect for all cultures, and develop a common purpose and shared set of values.

4. **Adaptive Leadership**

Community Schools facilitate the full and skilled participation of all parents, youth, and other community members by developing their decision-making, organizational, and group process abilities. Focused efforts are made to facilitate the participation and to develop the leadership capabilities of parents, youth, and community members who traditionally have not played an active role. These may include marginalized groups, low income families, First Nations and Métis peoples, and newcomers. The people who participate in school activities and in decision-making structures reflect the social, economic, and cultural make up of the community. Formal structures include Community School Councils, local boards of trustees, or advisory committees.

5. **Authentic Partnerships**

The school staff forges partnerships with parents, community members, First Nations and Métis organizations, community organizations, and human service partners. Partners collaborate to define education and community issues and to share resources as they work toward and evaluate the attainment of shared goals.

6. **Comprehensive Prevention and Early Intervention**

Community partnerships work to provide coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive education, health, justice, recreation, and social services necessary to address the diverse needs and interests of students. These services use strength-based approaches to meet the needs of children and youth in the context of their family. They are developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and are either delivered within or linked to the school.

# IV. The Community School Framework

The following illustration offers a visual of the Community School framework. This framework provides the comprehensive range of supports and approaches proven to meet the diverse learning needs of children, youth, and their families. Recognizing that every school and community is unique, with different strengths, needs, priorities, and resources, this framework provides the basis upon which schools will develop their own responses to meet their specific objectives.

SCHOOL PLUS
COLLABORATIVE PLANNING AND MONITORING PROCESS
LEARNING PROGRAM
• Prevention and early intervention programming
• A responsive, high quality academic program
• Adult learning opportunities
• Retention, re-entry and youth transitions programming
Children/ Youth
Families
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
• Creating safe, stable and healthy communities
• Leadership development and capacity building
• Strength-based approaches
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
• Family and community engagement in learning
• Caring, respectful and welcoming school environment
• School, community, classroom connections
INTEGRATED SERVICES
• Integrated education, health, social, justice, recreation, cultural services
• Collaboration and shared responsibility
• Effective use of resources
ACTUALIZING
PLANNING
PROGRESSING
COMMUNITY

### Explanation of the Illustration

In the Community School framework, children and youth are at the centre supported by their families and four key components:

- the learning program,
- family and community partnerships,
- integrated services, and
- community development.

These components are planned, implemented, and evaluated by the school staff, students, families, and community members. They are supported by a collaborative planning and monitoring process. When considered in a holistic way, this framework facilitates ongoing renewal.

## A. Children and Youth

The children and youth are the heart of the school and the centre of all activity. All aspects of the Community School focus on learning and well-being. There is unconditional commitment to children and young people and a belief that they will be successful. Children and youth are always considered within the context of their families.

## B. The Components

The four key components of the Saskatchewan Community Schools framework are:

1. The Learning Program,
2. Family and Community Partnerships,
3. Integrated Services, and
4. Community Development.

These four components work together to provide the comprehensive range of supports required for the education and well-being of children, youth, and their families. While the learning program is at the forefront of Community Schools, its success depends on the effectiveness of the other three components, which together provide the foundation for critical supports to its effectiveness and to the success of the students in the school. The following pages include a description of each component and its objectives.

### 1. The Learning Program

The learning program is grounded in the provincial curriculum. In addition, it offers a full range of educational supports aimed at increasing students' academic and life success. Its focus is on incorporating educational practices and responses that respect and reflect the experience, culture, and socio-economic background of the students and the community. The learning program includes:

- prevention and early intervention programming;
- a responsive, high quality academic program;
- retention, re-entry, and youth transitions programming; and
- adult learning opportunities.

***Objectives***

The objectives of the learning program are to:

- increase opportunities for community curriculum connections both inside and outside of the classroom;
- create a learning environment and program that are responsive, culturally affirming, and supportive for all students;
- improve the academic achievement of students, reduce age-grade discrepancies, and retain students in school by ensuring that curricula are challenging, knowledge and skills-based, and responsive to student diversity;
- foster in students the skills, knowledge, values, and self-confidence necessary to become competent, caring, and contributing adults;
- foster a commitment to lifelong learning as modeled through school beliefs and practices;
- provide services and supports that enable students to move smoothly from Prekindergarten years through the elementary and middle years into high school, and from there to post-secondary education or the labour market; and
- facilitate a range of meaningful adult learning opportunities that respond to family and community needs and interests.

### *Description*

**a. Prevention and Early Intervention Programming**

Prevention and early intervention programming is an important part of the learning program of the Community School. Prevention and early intervention programming can occur at any age and grade level. Strategies may include many of the following:

- Prekindergarten,
- language development supports,
- fine and gross motor skill development,
- immunizations and regular health check ups,
- early childhood psychology and mental health services,
- development of social and problem-solving skills and self-esteem,
- development of cognitive skills,
- nutrition and meal programs,
- transportation services,
- counselling services,
- suicide prevention and intervention programs;
- parent education and support,
- health promotion programming,
- daycare,
- before and after school childcare linked to other community initiatives,
- family literacy programming, and
- home visiting.

**b. A Responsive, High Quality Academic Program**

The delivery of the provincial curriculum is the core of the Community School's learning program. The Adaptive Dimension provides flexibility within the school program to enable schools and teachers to adapt curriculum materials and topics, instructional practices, and instructional environments in order to provide the most appropriate educational opportunities for students. Community Schools are fertile ground for the imaginative use of this opportunity in ways that include other staff, youth, parents, and community members. Community Schools move towards a true community-based education model where community priorities impact directly on and nurture curriculum.

**An effective learning program:**

- includes meaningful and challenging curriculum content encouraging all students to achieve their full potential;
- focuses on the objectives of the curriculum;
- allows all students the time to attain the skills and knowledge needed for all curricula;
- reflects and honours the experiences, cultures, traditions, attitudes, abilities, values, and learning needs of all students;
- is comprehensive and flexible;
- recognizes and reflects the nature and unique characteristics of the community;
- links with the family, community, and community agencies to enrich learning experiences;
- takes place in a caring and respectful environment;
- is planned and orderly and makes effective use of the skills and abilities of school personnel, family, and community members; and
- uses clear, unintimidating, and effective assessment and evaluation procedures.

*Core Curriculum is more than a body of content to be taught. It also includes:*

- *particular instructional approaches*
- *assessment methods*
- *attitudes, values, and behaviours consistent with supporting equitable education.*

*(Saskatchewan Education, 2001)*

In order for children to successfully access an effective learning program they may need additional supports to prepare them to learn. For example, significant research exists that demonstrates the relationship between nutrition and children's physical, emotional, and intellectual readiness to learn. If children come to school hungry or undernourished, their ability to learn is compromised. Community Schools provide nutrition programming and food experiences linked to the curriculum in an effort to meet the needs of the whole child and to optimize the learning environment.

***Benefits of School Nutrition Programming:***

- *increased academic functioning (Murphy et al., 1998). Small snacks are important closer to learning time.*
- *improved attendance (Edward & Evers, 2001; Hyndman, 2000)*
- *improved nutrient intakes of participants. One GOOD snack a day significantly improved children's diets (Sullivan et al., 2002)*
- *increased fruit and vegetable intake (Cullen et al., 2000)*
- *improved behaviour (Richards, 2001). Students are more settled, calm, more attentive and there are fewer playground fights.*
- *community building and socialization for parents and children (Edward & Evers, 2001)*

Nutrition programming plays a significant role in supporting children's readiness to learn. Community School nutrition programs focus on three major areas:

- to provide nutritious foods to meet the needs of hungry or undernourished children;
- to provide nutrition education/food experiences linked to the curriculum; and
- to engage parents and community in the nutrition program in support of community development (i.e., the development of school food policies, collective kitchens, and gardens).

**Examples of Community School responses in the learning program include:**

- emphasis on numeracy and literacy skills;
- student clusters based on criteria other than age-grade placement such as family connections, mentoring, and students of different grade levels working with others at same ability levels;
- teaching the processes and skills required across many subject areas in an integrated manner (e.g., hypothesis, analysis, decision making, and others);
- demonstrating commitment to students by assigning an adult advocate for each student;
- peer instruction and support activities;
- engaging family and community in suggesting content to support curriculum objectives that is familiar to students' experiences;
- scheduling the school day to adapt to the needs of students, families, and the school community (e.g., a breakfast program, evening access to school computer room and library, block timetabling, varying times for varied needs);
- Aboriginal languages programs;
- business partnerships to facilitate school-to-work opportunities; and
- in-house Elders and other Aboriginal resource people supporting the learning program.

***Questions for Reflection***

*__How__ are instructional strategies adapted to create opportunities for students to experience success?*
*__How__ is this shared with staff and community members?*

*__How__ are community priorities, issues and concerns reflected in the learning program?*
*__Is there__ dialogue between school and community and an understanding of what is important to your community?*
*__What__ does success mean in your community?*

**c. Retention, Re-entry, and Youth Transitions Programming**

Community Schools may be located in areas where segments of the population are highly mobile. Some families change schools numerous times in the school year. This mobility creates challenges for students as they adjust and readjust to different schools. It also complicates the efforts of teachers to provide an effective learning program.

Community Schools also provide support to help students during times of transition. These include entering Prekindergarten, successfully moving from middle years to the secondary level, and from secondary to post-secondary education and training, or to the labour market. These transitions can be difficult and may cause some students to drop out.

**Examples of programs and supports provided in Community Schools to address these issues include:**

- re-entry classrooms and tutorials that help to ease the transition back into school for students who have been out of school for some time;
- initiatives to reconnect to youth who are not in school;
- programs to orient students to high school;
- evening classes at the secondary level for older students; and
- work introduction and mentoring programs.

### d. Adult Learning Opportunities

A foundational belief of Community Schools is lifelong learning for all. Program needs and interests are identified by the school community and appropriate learning opportunities are offered to meet these needs. These programs may be delivered from the school, drawing on the strengths, resources, and expertise within the community. Recognizing that all adult learning opportunities cannot be met in one school, school personnel are aware of what opportunities are available within the community. They endeavour to work in partnership with service providers to remove barriers to participation so that all adults who want to take advantage of educational opportunities are able to access them. Examples of adult learning opportunities include the following:

- Adult Basic Education,
- English as a Second Language or Dialect,
- family literacy,
- parenting education,
- Aboriginal Languages,
- cultural and recreation programming,
- life-skills training,
- employment skills training,
- post-secondary opportunities, and
- nutrition education and health promotion.

## 2. Family and Community Partnerships

Community Schools direct significant effort towards developing meaningful partnerships with families and community. School personnel are inclusive in their efforts to involve family and community members who may not readily become involved in the school. For example, trust of the school may need to be rebuilt with some families.

***Objectives***

The objectives of family and community partnerships are to:

- create a caring, respectful, and welcoming school environment;
- foster a sense of shared responsibility among parents, community members, and educators for the education and well-being of children and youth;
- enhance opportunities for success of all children and youth by facilitating the active participation of parents and community members in student learning;

- provide opportunities for children and youth to learn within their community and to bring the community into the classroom;
- facilitate the engagement of families and community members in setting school goals, introducing and enriching programs, solving problems, and enhancing learning activities for students;
- increase Aboriginal leadership and participation in the school and school division;
- facilitate partnerships between families and community members to create safe and stable communities; and
- ensure full and effective use of school facilities by the community.

### *Questions for Reflection*

*How does the school leadership invite open and honest dialogue and create the environment for parent and community input?*

*How do current decision-making structures reflect and include the community?*
*How can more opportunities be created?*

### *Description*

Students, families, and community members work in partnership with school staff to enhance student learning at home, in the school, and in the community. Together they create a shared vision, set school/community goals, and identify issues and priorities. This includes accessing resources; setting school policy; implementing, and evaluating school activities; solving problems; and identifying outcomes.

The Community School, and the people and organizations linked to it, develop a strong and mutually supportive relationship. Students have a variety of learning opportunities both in the community and when the community comes into the classroom. Community members share expertise and life experiences with students as part of the learning program.

For youth engagement, the challenge lies within the creativity and abilities of adults wishing to move to the heart of engaging young people as authentic partners by:

- listening carefully and respectfully to their voices;
- developing an understanding of students' perspectives and their orientation to schooling;
- sharing information with young people in order to construct knowledge and make informed decisions together;
- supporting all youth to develop a sense of belonging;
- facilitating multiple opportunities for authentic and active engagement;
- supporting youth to develop participation and leadership skills;
- recognizing the significance and role that families and communities play in the learning and life experiences of youth; and

- sharing power with young people in order to shape the culture and vision of the school and community together.

**Examples of youth, family, and community engagement in schools include:**

- providing skill-building and support initiatives;
- forming a Community School Council;
- deciding with staff on school discipline program;
- establishing school beliefs;
- attending school professional development opportunities; and
- creating leadership opportunities for families and community members to support shared goals.

### 3. Integrated Services

In Community Schools, the school is a hub of the community, serving as a community "centre" and a meeting place where an array of services and supports are available. Through the integration of services, community, government, and community-based organizations collaborate to make the best use of existing resources, ensuring that services are available in a coordinated and comprehensive manner to support an evolving role of schools.

***Objectives***

The objectives of integrated services within Community Schools are to:

- provide, in collaboration with community agencies, a wide range of responsive social, health, justice, and recreation services to address barriers to learning for students and to increase their opportunities for success;
- develop interagency cooperation and community/school partnerships to access community resources and to link needed services to the school; and
- make the most effective use of school, community, municipal, and provincial resources.

*Questions for Reflection*

*How are integrated services initiatives developed?*
*Do they reflect a strength-based perspective?*
*Are they centered around the needs of children, youth, families and community?*
*What are the outcomes?*

*Is there a joint strategy among partners for student retention and meeting the needs of vulnerable youth?*

### *Description*

Some children and youth are unable to take full advantage of the learning program because of complex social, emotional, health, and developmental issues, which are barriers to their learning. The services and supports they need cut across the boundaries of schools, human service agencies, and different departments and levels of government. Community Schools play a key role in their communities, serving as centres for families to access an array of health, social, counselling, justice, personal support, and recreation services either linked to or available within the school.

**Services and Resources that Meet the Needs of Students**

Services and resources that support vulnerable children and youth are available from: families, school staff and programs, communities, community human service agencies, First Nations and Métis organizations, municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government. Among the services needed by vulnerable children and families that could be integrated and linked to the school are:

- **health services** - health education, mental health services, nutrition services and nutrition education, family planning, immunization, dental and medical care;
- **social services** - personal counselling, family services, day care;
- **justice services** - community policing, young offender supports, access to legal information and services;
- **recreation and cultural services** - sports, leisure activities, cultural activities, heritage languages; and
- **self-help and adult education** - parenting education, skills upgrading, and employment counselling.

Integrated services may result in:

- community meetings and events;
- "safe" rooms for children and youth in distress;
- daycare;
- community counselling and adult education activities;
- Elder/cultural resource persons services;
- recreation, evening, and summer programs; and
- nutrition education services.

## 4. Community Development

Community Schools work together with youth, families, communities, Aboriginal organizations, and human service partners. Community development is about identifying, connecting, and mobilizing the strengths within the community to achieve desired

outcomes. For community development to work, strong relationships need to be in place as well as a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive school culture and environment. As schools facilitate this process with families and community, leadership opportunities are created where everyone builds the capacity necessary to ensure success and well-being.

### *Objectives*

The objectives of community development in Community Schools are to:

- assist in developing a sense of community where all community members belong and are included;
- identify strengths of community members and mobilize these to improve opportunities for success in school and fulfillment in life for children and youth;
- facilitate the active engagement of school and community members and agencies in improving the quality of life in the community;
- assist in the development of the community to foster a safe, stable, and healthy environment for students and their families; and
- strengthen the sense of community by serving as a hub of community activity and development.

*There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about. (Wheatley, 2002)*

### *Description*

Community development is an inclusive, educational, and motivational process that engages and empowers people and communities to actively participate in guiding their social and economic affairs. Much work goes into developing relationships with the entire community and listening to their hopes, dreams, and needs. This relationship building occurs in both formal and informal ways. Community development may be new territory for schools and requires the involvement of all to ensure success. The community development role of schools means that they create the conditions for authentic community engagement and work with community in a respectful and inclusive way towards a shared vision of achieving success and well-being for all.

### *Questions for Reflection*

***How** are community strengths and needs identified?*
***Who** is involved in identifying these?*
***In what** ways are strengths utilized to collaboratively address community-identified needs?*

***How** are decisions made?*
***How** is community engaged in decision making?*

**Community development initiatives include:**

- developing shared beliefs and vision;
- creating opportunities for the success of all children and youth;
- youth services that focus on skills development;
- the sharing of Indigenous Knowledge;
- improved housing;
- anti-racism initiatives;
- community justice and crime prevention;
- services to address transiency and kids not attending school;
- improved facilities for child care;
- food security, nutrition education, community kitchens and gardens;
- addressing and advocating for services and supports for those living in poverty;
- support and counselling services for victims of substance abuse or domestic violence; and
- creating employment opportunities.

## C. Collaborative Planning and Monitoring Process

A Collaborative Planning and Monitoring Process will support continuous improvement with a focus on measurable outcomes. Based on community education and authentic community engagement, a learning community of staff, students, families, and community members collectively gather data, plan, implement, and evaluate outcomes related to the Community School. This process mirrors the School$^{PLUS}$ School and Division Improvement Initiative where data is gathered and school community teams plan for improvement and measure their outcomes. For further information related to School$^{PLUS}$, please visit www.schoolplus.gov.sk.ca.

**Process for Ongoing Renewal and The Community School Plan**

Within each Community School there is a dynamic and inclusive process for ongoing planning and program evaluation and improvement. This process of renewal is centred in the development and maintenance of the Community School Plan. The Plan is reviewed and updated each year in a collaborative way by the Community School Council, school staff, families, community members, students, and boards of education. The Community School Plan includes:

- a statement of the vision shared by all participants;
- a needs assessment;
- achievable objectives for the year based on priorities related to the four components of the Community School framework;

- an action plan including concrete activities that will serve to implement each of the objectives; and
- a collaborative planning and monitoring process.

Schools face the challenge of demonstrating that their approaches are viable and effective. This requires examining the Community School Plan in relation to teaching strategies, actualization of Core Curriculum, and community education principles. Schools need to demonstrate measurable outcomes related to meeting the diverse learning needs of all students.

Evaluation is critical to ensuring the effectiveness and success of Community Schools. It has been built into the Community School Plan as part of the process for ongoing renewal. Through evaluation processes, all involved with the school have the opportunity to review and assess the success of the Community School Plan and plan for improvements.

Both qualitative and quantitative processes are useful in collecting data to monitor the effectiveness of the Community School and to assess for learning. Quantitative processes are based on the collection of numerical data. Qualitative information is collected through anecdotal reporting techniques and describes the experience of the participants and their perceptions of the program. When combined, quantitative and qualitative analysis provides a more holistic and complete evaluation.

***Questions to Measure Outcomes***

*What aspects of the Plan worked well?*

*Why did they work?*

*What had to be in place?*

*What outcomes have been achieved by the Plan?*

*Were these the desired outcomes?*

*What difference has this made for children, youth, and their families?*

*Identifying and examining outcomes is necessary to ensure that activities made a difference. Answering these and other questions leads to the development of a new Community School Plan.*

# V. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities outlined below are intended to suggest what is needed from everyone involved to ensure the success of a Community School. This outline is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive. It describes expectations for roles and responsibilities that Community Schools can work towards, while providing the flexibility for variations in contributions, capacities, and roles from one school to another.

Included in the roles and responsibilities is the assumption that everyone involved in the Community School will participate in the development and implementation of the Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal, and support the principles defined in this document.

## 1. The Board of Education

Boards of education partner with the provincial government, community organizations, human service agencies, schools, families, and community members in the creation of Community Schools. They provide direction and support to each of the components of the Community School.

**The board of education has a responsibility to:**

- develop and implement comprehensive polices to support community education, including employment and education equity policies;
- eliminate barriers to authentic community engagement in schools;
- appropriately support Community Schools within its jurisdiction in terms of human and financial resources allocation;
- ensure input from the Council in the hiring process;
- recognize the challenging and labour intensive demands of schools serving vulnerable populations, and provide adequate human and other resources for their operation; and
- coordinate annual evaluation and documentation of program impact for individual schools.

## 2. Community School Leadership

In Community Schools, a strong leadership team is created to achieve the vision, goals, and objectives of community education. This team is comprised of the **Community School Council, the Community School Coordinator, and the Principal**. Through their shared roles and leadership, they engage with the school and community to support well-being and success.

### *The Community School Council*

The Community School Council or other representative body (hereafter referred to as the "Council") is an important mechanism for the Community School to engage with the community to support well-being and success. It assists in developing and supporting the relationships between the school and community.

*In rural school divisions, **The Education Act** stipulates that local boards of trustees are to be established and comprised of elected officials. The local board of trustees in some rural Community Schools have decided to dissolve and Community School Councils have been established. (Refer to sections 135 and 136 of **The Education Act, 1995** for procedures). In others, both the local board of trustees and a Community School Council exist.*

*Rural Community Schools are encouraged to explore the desired functions of a representative body and establish the structure(s) within the community that best achieves these functions.*

**A representative body will:**

- reflect the socio-economic and cultural makeup of the community;
- have meaningful roles and responsibilities that include decision making and providing advice on the learning program, school policies, facility use, community development, and community programming;
- use inclusive processes to seek wide community engagement and reach decisions; and
- lead in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Community School Plan.

The Council is made up of representatives of the parents, community, staff and students, as well as the principal and community school coordinator and human services personnel who work with the school. Through their actions, the Council has a role in developing parent and community leadership skills through education, shared leadership, capacity building, and empowerment.

**Selection of the Council**

As Community Schools are in rural, urban, and northern elementary and secondary schools, the makeup and selection of the Council will vary. It is important to ensure that the Council is representative of the school and community. The Council provides an opportunity to facilitate enhanced participation of First Nations and Métis peoples within the public education system. Through the Council, staff, students, families, and community members are meaningfully engaged in all aspects of school planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The building of an effective and representative Council may require the principal, community school coordinator, and other members of the Council to identify potential members and to help those people develop the skills and confidence necessary to work effectively as members. This additional step will help ensure that the Council is fully representative of both the school and the community.

Student participation on the Council is vital. Their ideas and contributions are valuable and can provide a perspective very different from the adults on the Council. Including students as members of the Council recognizes the contributions they make to their school and community and provides opportunities for them to develop their leadership and community development skills while playing an active role in their community.

### *The Community School Coordinator*

The coordinator works closely with the principal and the Community School Council. The coordinator has a background in community development, social work, or education and is an integral part of the school leadership team. The coordinator provides leadership in the learning program, integrated services, community development, and parent and community engagement within the school. (See Appendix C for Role of the Coordinator Rubric.)

### *The Principal*

The role of the principal in a Community School requires a dynamic, innovative, and committed professional. The principal will have sound knowledge of effective educational strategies and programs for diverse learners. The role demands leadership capability in community development processes and superior collaborative and interpersonal skills. Required as well is a strong commitment to empowering parents, students, staff, and community members to "create" a Community School. The principal works to develop a school culture and environment that is conducive to the engagement of families, community members, and other partners.

## Shared Roles of the Council, Coordinator and Principal

| | |
|---|---|
| **Planning, Implementation, and Ongoing Renewal** | • Engage students, staff, families, and community members to develop and implement the school vision, goals, and objectives. This includes organizing effective responses in the learning program, parent and community partnerships, integrated services, and community development.<br>• Manage the Council budget with accountability to the board of education and the province.<br>• Share decision making on a wide range of school policies such as discipline, attendance, student evaluation, and parent/school communications.<br>• Oversee the annual Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal. This includes data collection, evaluation, and documentation of Community School effectiveness. Information is shared with the school community, the board of education, and Saskatchewan Learning. Based on these activities, the Council, coordinator and principal lead the process to develop a new Community School Plan.<br>• Develop a positive, caring, and supportive culture and climate in the school. |
| **Learning Program** | • Work to ensure a high quality, culturally affirming, and academically challenging learning program.<br>• Plan and develop relevant and innovative educational programs and services.<br>• Explore a variety of instructional strategies where Core Curriculum is actualized and every student experiences success.<br>• Model the belief that all students will be successful.<br>• Develop a plan to identify and assess student outcomes.<br>• Facilitate parent and community engagement to help enhance the curriculum content and instructional practice.<br>• Support student attendance and retention.<br>• Create a high expectation among staff that students will succeed and families will be meaningfully engaged. |
| **Family and Community Partnerships** | • Promote collaboration and effective communication among all members of the school and community.<br>• Build relationships with the entire community.<br>• Facilitate parent and community engagement and provide capacity-building opportunities such as leadership development and adult learning opportunities.<br>• Facilitate the representational participation of parents and community members, including First Nations and Métis peoples and vulnerable families.<br>• Mobilize the strengths of families and community members and community resources.<br>• Oversee community use of school facilities and make recommendations concerning improvement and maintenance of building and equipment. |

## Shared Roles of the Council, Coordinator and Principal *continued*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Integrated Services** | • Identify school and community strengths, needs, and priorities and work to develop responses drawing on community resources.<br>• Identify and establish partnerships with human service providers and other community agencies to develop and coordinate integrated education, health, social, justice, and recreation services and programs for students and their families. |
| **Community Development** | • Model trust, respect, and inclusion through relationship building with the community.<br>• Initiate and participate in activities to identify community strengths and mobilize these to undertake activities to address community priorities.<br>• Facilitate ways to utilize community strengths within the school. |
| **Staffing** | • Develop criteria and participate in the selection of school personnel.<br>• Create mechanisms for community input and participation into the selection of school personnel. |
| **Leadership** | • Create opportunities for staff, students, families, and community members to increase their knowledge about community education, community development, and Aboriginal education.<br>• Build a school culture of excellence that encourages risk taking, creativity, and innovation.<br>• Create forums for staff, students, families, and community members to collectively reflect on school practices, and structures to ensure they are aligned with community education beliefs. (Community Education Reflection Tool can help to facilitate this process. For a copy of this tool, please visit the Community Education area at www.sasklearning.gov.sk.ca)<br>• Advocate on behalf of the school and community regarding a variety of issues.<br>• Model the importance of engaging parents and create meaningful opportunities within the school for families to be involved. |

## 3. Support Personnel

Community Schools employ many support personnel to address their vision, goals, and objectives. These positions take on a variety of different forms and are based on community-identified needs. Positions may include: cultural teachers/advisors, outreach workers, educational assistants, community school associates, counselors, addiction workers, and others. Efforts are made to employ personnel of First Nations or Métis ancestry who are from the community in which the school is located. They serve as role models and play a substantial role in enriching and enhancing the learning program. By providing information about the culture and the community, they help the staff become more aware of, and sensitive to, the cultural and socio-economic realities.

Community School support personnel can take an active role in finding the gifts of community members and ensuring they are utilized within the school and within the learning program. Support personnel lead the way to meaningful parental engagement in the school by developing strong relationships with the families. As well, support personnel play a capacity-building role in working with parents and the community. They work to ensure that families and community members are aware of school activities and events and facilitate the active participation of the entire community. They identify and develop leadership among parents and community members, promoting involvement in the Council.

**Support personnel have a responsibility to:**

- be an active part of the support team for the students in the school;
- develop a knowledge of the community within which they are working and of the educational needs of First Nations and Métis and vulnerable students;
- identify and facilitate leadership among school and community members and promote active participation on the Council; and
- participate in the development of the Community School Plan and collaborative planning and monitoring process.

## 4. Nutrition Coordinator

Staffing arrangements for nutrition programming vary from school to school depending upon resources and availability of volunteer supports. Some schools employ a nutrition coordinator who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school nutrition

programming. It is recommended that the nutrition coordinator successfully complete the Food Safe Level I Course in compliance with Section 10 of the *Saskatchewan Public Eating Establishment Regulations*. These regulations state that every food eating establishment must have a minimum of one certified food handler working at all times.

**The nutrition coordinator has a responsibility to:**

- collaborate with other professionals to provide educational opportunities for families, students, and other community members on such topics as nutrition, menu planning, food preparation, and food buying on a budget;
- work cooperatively with teachers in support of the delivery of nutrition education experiences for children linked to a broad range of curriculum areas (i.e. health education, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies);
- facilitate parent and community involvement in collective kitchens, dialogue of school food policies, and broad food security issues within the community;
- coordinate and/or prepare healthy and nutritious breakfasts, lunches, and/or snacks;
- train and coordinate volunteers from among families, students, and community to assist with the program;
- participate in developing the Community School Plan and the process for ongoing renewal; and
- commit to ongoing professional development in the areas of community education and development, foodservice training, and awareness of children's health and wellness issues.

## 5. Teachers

Teachers in Community Schools have a strong commitment to the success and well-being of all students. The ability to develop and adapt curriculum content and teaching techniques to be responsive to student needs and experiences is critical. They are innovative, flexible, cooperative, and caring in their approach to teaching.

The careful selection of the teaching staff is critical to the quality of the learning program. Teachers will be appointed by the board of education, but will be selected based on criteria that include input from the Council.

Because of the relatively high proportion of First Nations and Métis students in many Community Schools, boards of education are encouraged to make an effort to hire First Nations or Métis teachers. In addition to their knowledge of First Nations and Métis history, culture, and traditions, they function as role models for all students. Teachers in Community Schools have a strong commitment to ensuring success for First Nations and Métis students and have a specialized knowledge of their learning needs and life experiences.

**Teachers have a responsibility to:**

- work cooperatively and collaboratively with the Community School Coordinator, educational assistants, parents, community members, and other human service professionals to achieve excellence in the learning program and meet the needs of students;
- develop a knowledge of the community within which they are working and of the educational needs of First Nations and Métis students;
- implement instructional strategies proven effective in meeting diverse learning needs;
- seek opportunities to integrate Aboriginal content and perspectives across the curriculum;
- develop meaningful and challenging programs within Saskatchewan's Core Curriculum that successfully respond to the needs and realities of students' lives and are based on community education principles;
- develop effective communication and liaison with parents and the home;
- engage students, families, and other partners in the learning program;
- have a commitment to ongoing professional development in the areas of enhanced parent and community partnerships, cultural responsiveness, community education and development; and
- play an active part in the development of the vision, Community School Plan, and collaborative planning and monitoring process.

## 6. Students

Children and youth are the heart of the school and the focus of its programs and services. They are aware of their community and the important role they play in developing the community. Through authentic engagement, they develop leadership and community development skills and share responsibility for their own learning.

They are partners in a dynamic school and in creating a caring, respectful, and welcoming environment.

**Students:**

- take responsibility for their own learning and actively participate in the learning opportunities afforded by the high quality education program and by access to the broad range of activities and supports;
- provide representation on the Council;
- provide peer support and assistance to other students in the learning program and throughout the school; and
- participate in developing the Community School Plan and collaborative planning and monitoring process.

## 7. Parents and Families

Parents play a key role as partners in the success of the school. Their engagement is actively sought and is critical to achieving student success and well-being.

**Families have a responsibility to:**

- provide the necessary nurturing and support their children need to participate effectively in school;
- assist in creating a caring, respectful, and welcoming school environment;
- advocate for school and community and invite other community members to participate in the school;
- provide information to school staff on community dynamics, strengths, priorities, and needs;
- be actively engaged in their children's learning and participate in school programs and activities to the extent they are able; and
- participate in the development and implementation of the Community School Plan and collaborative planning and monitoring process.

## 8. School Division Personnel

School division personnel such as Directors of Education, Superintendents, and Consultants, provide support to each of the components of the Community School. They foster an environment that supports practices based on community education philosophy. Central office staff support the authentic engagement of youth,

families, and community members within the school towards shared planning, implementation, evaluation, and shared decision making. They support Community School implementation by providing opportunities for their staff to reflect and dialogue within the learning community and by supporting further learning in the areas of community education, Aboriginal education, and School$^{PLUS}$.

**School Division Personnel have a responsibility to:**

- provide supports to Community Schools to authentically engage youth, families, and communities in planning, implementation, and evaluation;
- develop a strategy for the selection, orientation, and ongoing professional development of staff;
- promote shared decision making within Community Schools;
- provide ongoing professional development particularly in the areas of instructional practices to meet diverse learning needs, community education, community development, and Aboriginal education;
- identify measurable outcomes with Community Schools and provide support to achieve these; and
- ensure Community Schools are supported in their efforts to implement the Community School framework to achieve success and well-being for all students.

## 9. Community Agencies, Groups, and Partners

Community agencies, groups, and partners provide a variety of critical supports to the learning program and for the well-being of students and their families. They include churches, service clubs, human service partners, municipal and provincial services, regional health authorities, First Nations and Métis organizations, post-secondary institutions, businesses, Friendship Centres, and community associations.

**Community Agencies/Partners:**

- participate on the Council and in the development of the Community School Plan;
- work with the Council, principal, community school coordinator, and staff in providing a range of supports to meet the needs of children, youth, and their families;
- respect the values and protocols of the school and community; and
- maintain the confidentiality of student records and information.

## 10. Government Departments

Provincial human service departments have roles to play in working with Community Schools. They provide a number of the services critical to the well-being and success of students and their families. Through School$^{PLUS}$, provincial services are assessed and realigned, where possible, to provide an integrated, coordinated range of supports accessible to children, youth, and their families.

## 11. Saskatchewan Learning

In partnership with boards of education, Saskatchewan Learning provides funding and the policy and conceptual framework for Community Schools. Saskatchewan Learning maintains close links with the boards of education, divisions, and school personnel and provides forums for Community Schools' networking and discussions.

**The Department will:**

- provide the overall direction for the development of Community Schools;
- manage the provincial Community Schools Program;
- provide support, consultation, and information to boards of education, school divisions, and schools;
- share in the provision of funding for designated Community Schools;
- receive and analyze data from Community Schools to document their effectiveness and to ensure accountability;
- carry out research and maintain information on current trends and issues related to community education, needs of vulnerable children and youth and First Nations and Métis students, and successful education approaches;
- promote the Community School approach and innovations of individual schools; and
- work with boards of education to implement innovative programs and approaches for vulnerable and First Nations and Métis students.

# A. Continuum of Parent and Community Involvement and Partnerships

*All forms of Parent and Community Involvement and Partnerships are important and valued. Each builds upon the other.*

| | Meeting Basic Needs | Developing Openness and Two-Way Communication | Supporting Learning at Home and in Community | Participating in Voluntary and Advisory Roles | Building Collaboration and Partnerships | Participating in Governance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Examples of Activities And Programs** | ***At home…***<br>• safe, caring, home environment<br>• adequate food, clothing, rest and shelter<br>***In school/community…***<br>• nutrition programs<br>• clothing exchanges<br>• "safe rooms"<br>• parenting education<br>• community kitchens<br>• home-school liaison | ***At home…***<br>• advising teacher of students' likes and dislikes, changes to routine, etc.<br>• discussing concerns and successes with the teacher<br>• reviewing information sent home from school<br>• attending meetings and events<br>***In school/community…***<br>• welcoming school environment<br>• parent/student/teacher conferences<br>• school newsletters<br>• home visits<br>• surveys of parent opinion<br>• message board advertising school events and activities<br>• newspaper columns | ***At home…***<br>• being interested in and encouraging children's learning<br>• creating a place to study work<br>• reading to children<br>• learning about curriculum<br>• making learning part of everyday life – baking, driving, shopping, etc.<br>***In the community…***<br>• mentoring<br>• creating safe, stable communities<br>***In the school…***<br>• family literacy programs<br>• assignments that encourage parent/family involvement<br>• learning contracts among parents, teachers, and students | • summer holiday learning projects<br>• attending/assisting with school events<br>• fund raising<br>• volunteering – classroom, field trip, library, lunchroom, etc.<br>• room for volunteers/parents<br>• storytelling/guest speakers<br>• tutoring of students<br>• newsletter coordination<br>• leading clubs – drama, gardening, photography, computers, etc.<br>• parent centres<br>• providing advice on school issues/programs<br>• advising on policy issues – school code of conduct, student discipline, curriculum, program adaptations, schedules, etc. | • financial and "in kind" contributions<br>• business partnerships and sponsorships<br>• integrated services<br>• community development<br>• youth community service/work experience<br>• in-school daycare<br>• early intervention preschool<br>• shared facilities<br>• adopt-a-school | • planning, problem solving<br>• making decisions about:<br>- budget<br>- program adaptations<br>- priorities<br>- criteria for staff and/or staffing<br>- school facilities<br>- training in leadership and decision-making skills<br>- program assessment<br>• shared management of project, program, or school<br>• partnerships with Aboriginal peoples, organizations and governments |
| **Structure** | • self-help groups<br>• school level organizations – parent/teacher association, parent council, school council, home and school association<br>• community association<br>• school-community liaison program | • school/community liaison program<br>• school level organizations – parent/teacher association, parent council, school council, home and school association<br>• community association<br>• district board of trustees/conseil d'école | • school/community liaison program<br>• school level organizations – parent/teacher association, parent council, school council, home and school association<br>• district board of trustees/conseil d'école<br>• community association | • volunteer programs<br>• school level organizations – parent/teacher association, parent council, school council, home and school association<br>• district board of trustees/conseil d'école<br>• community association | • advisory committees<br>• interagency committees<br>• school level organizations – parent/teacher association, parent council, school council, home and school association<br>• district board of trustees/conseil d'école | • school councils, parent advisory council, school/community council<br>• district board of trustees/conseil d'école<br>• co-management board<br>• associate schools<br>• board of education/conseil scolaire fransaskois |
| | ----------► **increased collaboration with educators, shared responsibility for education, and participation in decision making** ----------► | | | | | |

(Adapted from the work of Joyce Epstein)

## B. Rubric: Community Education: Engagement and Development

*Community education seeks to build authentic and respectful connections among the school, the family, and the community to ensure success for all. It is based on the beliefs of inclusive community engagement and lifelong learning. In a community education environment, a learning community is created when school staff, students, parents, community members, and human service providers plan, make decisions, and evaluate outcomes together.*

**Key Elements:**

- Inclusiveness – processes that engage a broad cross-section of community members.
- Shared Responsibility – the engagement and acceptance of responsibility for an active role in building relationships among all partners.
- Shared Leadership – the transparency and acceptance of equitable and shared decision making among all partners.
- Responsiveness – instruction, programs, and services that meet the diverse and changing conditions of children, youth, families, and communities.
- Integrated Services – services and supports that are holistic, accessible, and linked to or based in schools.
- Lifelong Learning – providing opportunities that embrace the concept of lifelong learning for community members of all ages.

| Planning Stage: Constructing Connections | Progressing Stage: Commitment | Actualizing Stage: Synergy |
|---|---|---|
| • Identify the broad section of community members who will form the learning community. | • Develop processes for working together and provide opportunities for the active involvement of all members of the learning community. | • Inclusive processes and ongoing dialogue engage a broad range of school and community members who form the dynamic learning community. |
| • Members of the emerging learning community participate in developing a shared vision of what they want to accomplish together. | • Learning community members accept responsibility for advancing the shared vision. | • Learning community members are engaged in identifying local strengths, needs, and collaboratively work toward their shared vision in a culture of mutual trust and respect. |
| • Develop a common understanding about shared leadership. | • Provide opportunities for leadership roles among learning community members. | • Leadership roles are continuously developed, shared, and nurtured among all members of the learning community. |
| • Learning community identifies school and community assets, strengths, and areas of need. | • Assets and strengths are used to develop programs, services, and community-based education that is responsive to school and community-identified needs. | • Children, youth, families, and the community are engaged in programs, services, and community-based education that respond to their diverse and changing conditions. |
| • Services and supports are available for students and their families. | • Services and supports are available, coordinated, and make use of some community and school resources. | • Services and supports engage communities, are accessible to all, and make maximum use of community and school-linked resources. |
| • Some early learning opportunities and extra-curricular activities are available for students, families, and community organizations. | • Early childhood, extra curricular, and some adult learning opportunities and supports are available for students, staffs, and families. | • Members of the learning community plan develop, participate in, and evaluate the outcomes of the lifelong learning opportunities provided. |

## C. Role of the Coordinator Rubric

| Criteria | Aware | Developing | Incorporated | Integrated |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Staff Leadership*** | Attends staff meetings. | Shares program dates and times with staff at meetings. | Challenges staff by sharing information about community education. | Leads staff and community through a process of reflection to ensure school practices are aligned with community education principles and beliefs. |
| ***Partnerships*** | Compiles inventory of community and develops a community description.<br>Presents information to parents and community members.<br>Recognizes the importance of parent involvement and creates a welcoming environment to get parents in the school. | Makes contacts, builds relationships, and is sensitive to participants.<br>Gets input from all stake-holders (surveys, home visits, and council meetings).<br>Active recruitment of new members.<br>Reports and shares compiled information. | Implements and monitors programs and they become a regular part of the school program.<br>Builds capacity amongst all stakeholders.<br>Creates opportunities for parent and community involvement and recognizes the efforts of community members. | Ongoing assessment, evaluation, and renewal of partnerships.<br>Active participation in shared decision making, program design, and management.<br>Is a support and resource person to parents and community. |
| ***Personal and Professional Growth*** | Aware of need for continuous growth and learning. | Develops self-directed approach to lifelong learning. | Implements strategies for professional growth. | Self-reflection process in place for personal and professional growth. |

| Criteria | Aware | Developing | Incorporated | Integrated |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Engaging First Nations and Métis Families*** | Identifies and recognizes community and its residents.<br>Acknowledges history of community and families. | Builds relationships with First Nations and Métis families.<br>Understands culture of First Nations and Métis peoples. | Facilitates community engagement.<br>Finds creative ways to include community members' "gifts" within the learning program. | Community has been empowered to take responsibility. |
| ***Communication*** | Recognizes need to communicate with stakeholders. | Recognizes lines of communication. | Uses effective strategies with stakeholders. | Facilitates open and frank dialogue among stakeholders. |
| ***Learning Program*** | Recognizes curriculum has scope, a sequence, and a plan. | Recognizes possibility of role to be played in curricular enhancement. | Enriches learning program in collaboration with teacher. | Community sees role in curriculum; school sees role of community in curriculum; coordinator facilitates. |
| ***Community Development*** | Community School awareness.<br>Gathers information through community profile to find issues, needs, and community resources.<br>Networks with other colleagues. | Initially controls parents and community/ agency involvement.<br>Identifies resources and gets input from community through home visits and other ways. | Leadership development (parent council).<br>School partnerships and interagency.<br>Participatory research. | Agencies working with parents to network and build community.<br>Plans joint community projects with other groups.<br>Regular interagency meetings. |
| ***Empowering Community*** | Welcoming environment.<br>Greets parents. | Finds out needs/wants.<br>Gets parents' input and involvement. | Surveys<br>Assists in developing plans; supports goals. | Parent ownership/control and leadership. |

| Criteria | Aware | Developing | Incorporated | Integrated |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Engaging Marginalized Groups*** | Initial contact- listening.<br>Respect.<br>Target. | Understands traditions<br>Mentors and encourages joining and being part of school. | Brings in resources and programs. | Integrating marginalized groups into regular part of school program.<br>Elders as regular part of school plan. |
| ***Integrated Case Management*** | Focuses on fixing problems. | Meets with agencies and partners. | Includes the individual/ family in the meeting. | Facilitates a process where the individual/family leads and decides action (Wraparound). |
| ***Student Engagement*** | Offers limited choices and limited opportunities for student voice. | Offers choices and opportunities. | Facilitates student engagement.<br>Students participate in focus groups. | Students are empowered and come to coordinator for support.<br>Students are actively engaged in a representative community council. |
| ***Sharing Community Education Philosophy*** | Solely responsible for community education philosophy. | Involves staff. | Includes parents and students. | Includes the learning community of students, staff, parents, and community members in sharing community education philosophy. |

Rubric developed by a sub-committee of the Community Schools Working Group. Community School Coordinator rubrics approved by the Community Schools Working Group September 23, 2003.

# D. Nutrition and Food Safety Recommendations for Nutrition Programs in Saskatchewan Community Schools

**Written by the Public Health Nutritionists of Saskatchewan** 05/28/04

School nutrition programs are in place to improve the health and learning potential of children. A child has very high nutrient needs in relation to the volume of food eaten; therefore, it is essential that foods served are high in nutritional value and without excessive fat, salt, and sugar. Nutritious food supports growth, good health, healthy weights, and optimal learning.

The Nutrition and Food Safety Recommendations for Saskatchewan Community Schools promote the provision of high quality, nutritious food and foster the management of an efficient and economical food service. The recommendations apply to breakfast/snack/lunch programs in elementary and secondary schools. For guidance in applying the recommendations, consult a Public Health Nutritionist in your Health Region.

## 1. Menu Planning

1.1 The use of seasonally adapted cycle menus is recommended.

1.2 Menus should be based on the nutrition guidelines in *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*.
**Breakfast** - means 1 serving from each of 3 food groups
**Snack** - means 1 serving from each of 2 or more food groups
**Lunch** - means at least 1 serving from each of the 4 food groups

Serving sizes should be appropriate for the age of the child.

- **Grain Products** - 1 slice bread, 30 g cold cereal, 175 mL hot cereal, 1/2 pita or 1/2 bun, 125 mL pasta or rice
- **Vegetables and Fruit** - 1 medium sized vegetable or fruit, 125 mL fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables or fruit, 250 mL salad, 125 mL juice
- **Milk Products** - 250 mL milk, 50 g cheese, 175 mL yogurt
- **Meat and Alternatives** - 50-100 g meat, poultry, fish, 1-2 eggs, 125-250 mL beans, 100 g tofu, 30 mL peanut butter

- A variety of foods from each food group in *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* should be included.
- Whole grain products, dark green and orange vegetables, and orange fruit should be served often *(they should be served everyday, or "most often")*.
- The use of food preparation methods such as deep fat frying that significantly add to the fat content of food are discouraged. Methods that reduce the fat content of food are encouraged.

1.3 Menus must meet the following criteria from the "Food Selection Categories" (visit the Community Education area at www.sasklearning.gov.sk.ca for this information).

**"Serve Most Often"** foods may be served without restriction
**"Serve Sometimes"** Only 2 –3 foods from this category may be served per week. When served it is best to combine these foods with foods from the "Serve Most Often" group rather than alone.
**"Serve Least Often"** Limited use; reserve for fundraisers, school canteens, and school council meetings. If these foods are used, limit use to 1 food from this category no more than 2 times in a four-week period.

## 2. Menu Evaluation

2.1 Menus should be prepared and evaluated by school personnel and include community consultation and input. A Public Health Nutritionist or other Registered Dietitian may be consulted.

## 3. Food Safety Standards

Food Safety Standards are intended to ensure that food for students is acquired, prepared, stored and served in a safe manner. Provincial regulations and standards apply to food service in schools. For guidance in applying the regulations and standards, contact a Public Health Inspector at your local Health Region.

3.1 Prior to construction, renovation and operation, contact a local Public Health Inspector for plan approval and arrangements for necessary inspections.

3.2 All staff who handle food must successfully complete a Certified Food Handling Course prior to, or as soon as possible after, commencement of duties. Contact your Health Region for a schedule of available courses.

3.3 All food used in school nutrition programs must be purchased from an approved source. If there is a question about that source, contact the Public Health Inspector. Examples of sources not approved: private residence, farm slaughtered meat.

3.4 The acceptability of donated foods is to be discussed with a Public Health Inspector. In general, donated foods are not acceptable in school nutrition programs; however, fresh fruit and vegetables, day-old bread, muffins, and uncooked pasta may be acceptable. The following foods must never be accepted:

- home canned goods
- raw milk
- eggs
- home processed meat, poultry, fish or dairy products
- dented, rusted or bulging canned goods, or any food with an expired "best before" date
- frozen food
- pastry or dessert items
- left-over food from banquets, parties, etc.

3.5 In the case of an emergency, such as suspected contaminated food or food-borne illness, a Public Health Inspector must be contacted.

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